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February 3, 2004
Immediate Release

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Environment Department Fines LANL \$854,087 for Hazardous Waste Violations Uncovered in 'Wall to Wall' Inspection

(Santa Fe, NM) — The New Mexico Environment Department (NMED) today issued a compliance order to Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL) for several violations of state hazardous waste management regulations carrying a total civil penalty of \$854,087. These violations were uncovered during a "wall to wall" inspection of LANL by NMED enforcement personnel in 2001. LANL was confirmed to be a significant non-complier based upon the violations documented during this inspection.

"I hope that this order sends notice to LANL that NMED is catching up on enforcement actions that have been left unaddressed for far too long," said NMED Secretary Ron Curry. "I have redirected NMED's resources to LANL and away from WIPP both to catch up on this backlog and to reflect the department's priorities at this time."

LANL's seven hazardous waste violations included failure to perform an adequate hazardous waste determination on chemicals discarded in LANL's Technical Area (TA) 35, failure to adequately track mixed waste contained in six 55 gallon drums, one 30 gallon drum and one five gallon drum at TA-50, failure to maintain an eyewash unit in operable condition at TA-53, failure to manage waste piles at TA-39 to provide adequate wind protection, waste analysis and containment, as well as three other information management violations.

"I expect the highest level of environmental compliance and protection from LANL," said Secretary Curry. "Unfortunately, the lab has not met this mark in the past. I will continue to take vigorous enforcement action whenever necessary to make sure the lab lives up to the promises it has made to the people of New Mexico."

LANL was issued a notice of violation (NOV) on February 4, 2002 for these infractions.

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LANL has 30 days to request a hearing in this matter. A settlement conference may also be requested with any settlement reached being set forth in a stipulated final order between the parties. All penalties paid will go the State of New Mexico Hazardous Waste Emergency Fund where they will be available for environmental clean ups.

The order is between NMED, the United States Department of Energy (DOE) and the University of California, who operates the lab under contract with DOE.

For further information contact Jon Goldstein, Communications Director, NMED at (505) 827-0314.

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